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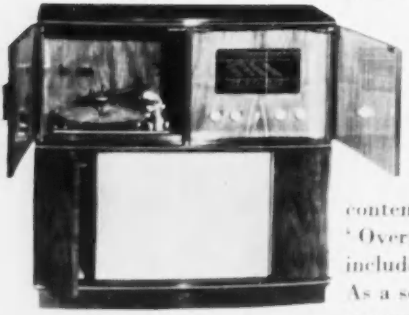

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Michael Redgrave and Barbara Jefford

as they appear as Hector and Andromache in Christopher Fry's distinguished translation of the play "La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas Lieu" by Jean Giraudoux, which has proved one of the most interesting plays of recent months. Directed by Harold Clurman with decor by Loudon Sainthill, "Tiger at the Gates" will be featured fully in pictures next month.

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Vol. LI **No. 366**

JULY 1955

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Over the Footlights

THE theatre historian of a hundred years hence will find it difficult to arrive at a conclusion about the merits of our present day leading actors' rendering of famous rôles. Laurence Olivier's current Macbeth at Stratford-upon-Avon is a case in point, but both this writer, who attended the opening night and Harold Matthews, our critic, who saw a subsequent performance, are agreed that this is a great interpretation and very likely the finest Macbeth of our time. We feel privileged to be able to pay tribute to this rendering and to that of Vivien Leigh, as Lady Macbeth. Incidentally, it strikes us as odd that the many criticisms levelled at Miss Leigh should be on account of her beauty and small stature. Why these physical attributes should be a drawback one cannot understand. Homicidal women are not necessarily large-boned and Vivien Leigh's beauty added poignancy to the lady's growing remorse and untimely death.

Last month we referred to a letter in *The Times* from Henry Sherek apropos *Saint Joan* and the Paris Festival. The British Council replied with assurances that there had been a misunderstanding in this affair as they had received no definite application and certainly would not have refused assistance on the grounds stated. We are glad to put this on record.

Several productions have been staged in June too late for review in this issue. They include *Light Fantastic*, the new revue at the Fortune (21st); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Robert Atkins as Bottom, at the Open-Air Theatre, Regent's Park (24th); *Les Compagnons de la Chanson*, Palace (27th) and *From Here and There*, the Laurier Lister revue at the Royal Court (29th).

Among outstanding theatrical events during July is the forthcoming production of *Nina* at the Haymarket on the 6th. Edith Evans, James Hayter and Michael Hordern are the stars in this André Roussin farce translated by Arthur Macrae, which is to be directed by Rex Harrison. John Clements, who this year celebrates his twenty-fifth year in the theatre, has joined the Board of Directors of the Saville Theatre, which will in future be under his personal management. His first presentation there will be *The Shadow of Doubt*, a new play by Norman King, which opens on 7th July. John Clements, Jane Baxter, Raymond Huntley, Patrick Barr, Henry Hewitt, Anne Leon, Toke Townley and Eileen Way play the eight characters in the play, which will be directed by Allan Davis, who has produced several plays at the Bristol Old Vic. The settings are by Laurence Irving. On the 13th the new musical *Twenty Minutes South* (originally produced at the Players) comes to the St. Martin's. F.S.

Cover Portrait: Vivien Leigh as Lady Macbeth *(Angus McBean)*

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New Shows Reviewed

"The Diary of a Nobody" *(Duchess)*

GEORGE and Weedon Grossmith's book presented a West End actor's idea of suburbia. Humorous and sentimental by turns, it was never unkindly satirical but it did treat rather heavily with superficialities. It was bitty, as diaries are bound to be, and oodles of money fell on the undeserving to provide a happy ending. Diary jottings, an insubstantial basis for any play, provide a flimsy platform for two such valued heavy-weights as Leslie Henson and Hermione Baddeley. These stars simply have not

Hermione Baddeley as she appeared in "The Diary of a Nobody," which unhappily finished its run at the Duchess on 18th June.

enough to do as Mr. and Mrs. Pooter. Reading the diary, we had an amusing view of life in Brickfield Terrace in 1888 seen through the eyes of Mr. Pooter. In the play, we take an outside view and Mr. Pooter becomes merely a humble member of small society and his diary just an object. His near-to-nothingness can never be half so funny on a stage as it is in imagination. Still, it is good to see him.

This production by Basil Dean is the same as that which was shown at the Arts Theatre last September, but with several changes in the cast. It shone with a gentle glow at the Arts and a more brilliant effulgence is neither possible nor desirable. Lillie Girl's songs, now sung by Rosemarie Hill, and Burwen Fosselton's imitation of Henry Irving, again by Alan Macnaughtan, remain the evening's high-spots. H.G.M.

"The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker" *(New)*

A VISIT to *Mr. Pennypacker* is recommended. This comedy by Liam O'Brien is an American one. Once again we are back in the 'nineties when a middle class led narrow lives and made money. We smile at their inhibitions, envy their

"The Diary of a Nobody"—Duchess, 17th May.
"The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker"—New, 18th May.
"Happy Returns"—New Watergate, 19th May.
"The Reluctant Debutante"—Cambridge, 24th May.
"Emlyn Williams as Dylan Thomas Growing up"—Globe, 21st May.
(See pages 8 and 9)
"The Tempest"—Open Air Theatre, 1st June.
"The Lost Generation"—Garrick, 1st June.
"Tiger at the Gates"—Apollo, 2nd June.
"The Legend of Pepito"—Royal, Stratford E., 3rd June.
"Ruth Draper"—St. Martin's, 6th June.
"Mourning Becomes Electra"—Arts, 9th June.
"Moby Dick"—Duke of York's, 16th June.

prosperity and wait for the bombshell to explode.

Mr. Pennypacker packs pork in a big way in Wilmington and Philadelphia. For twenty years he has maintained in each city a house presided over by a lady who thought she was his sole spouse and who bore him seven children. Mr. P. is an ideal character; his fidelity has been double that of the ordinary husband and few men have lead such regular lives. The accidental disclosure in the Wilmington household that the model husband and father is technically a bigamist provides a wonderful climax to the first Act and the curtain descends upon Grampa in a fit and Auntie in a swoon. After that, tension slackens a little, although the children run away while Mr. Pennypacker is tackling awkward questions with high-flown anarchic sentences. A fact of great importance in the case is suppressed until the play is near its end, which, of

Elizabeth Sellars as Mrs. Pennypacker in the successful new American comedy at the New Theatre.

course, is then simplified considerably. The man is finally judged by his children—but forgiven. It is, while quite preposterous, a

"Happy Returns"

L to R **Edward Woodward, Thelma Ruby and Jimmy Thompson as they appear in "Newspaper Readers," one of the amusing sketches which form part of "Happy Returns," the new revue at the New Watergate Theatre, which is reviewed on this page.**

(Picture by Douglas Burn)

pleasing comedy and the characters have plenty of human appeal.

Our stage abounds in juvenile talent and here a promising bunch are employed. John Fernald has ably co-ordinated the action in an interesting set by Paul Mayo.

Nigel Patrick, with a light touch, made the bigamist appear rational, unselfish and amusing. Elizabeth Sellars presented Mrs. Pennypacker of Wilmington as a sweet woman, equally reasonable and equally firm as to her own more orthodox standards of conduct. Hugh Wakefield played Mr. Pennypacker, Senior, the irascible old founder of the business, always on the verge of apoplexy. Helena Pickard made appeal as a prim, devoted aunt. Noel Iliff, with tact and skill, maintained the countenance of a professional upholder of orthodoxy. The bashful turbulence of young love was depicted by Jocelyn James and John Forrest.

H.G.M.

"Happy Returns" *(New Watergate)*

IN this "reprise" entertainment, which opened on 19th May, a very talented team put over old and new items in rapid succession and with agreeable gusto. On the whole, solo items registered more decisively than concerted ones, although "Ex-Prisoner's Song," from *High Spirits*, 1953, had still sufficient topical punch to ring the bell. An old number that was very welcome was "La Loge," Gerard Bryant's and Charles Zwar's song from *The Gate Revue* of 1940, which Phillipa Reid successfully put over in the character of Renoir's lady, whom she astonishingly resembled. Jimmy Thompson's terse and witty survey of the London stage served as an enjoyable aperitif. Towards the close, his singing of "Small Time," from *Over the Moon*, 1953, was equally matter for admiration. Besides the lady and gentleman mentioned, the cast included Thelma Ruby, Pamela Allen, Ann Amouri, Barbara Windsor, John Whyte and Edward Woodward. Direction was by Eleanor Fazan, décor by Henry Graveney, and Stanley Myers was at the piano.

H.G.M.

"The Reluctant Debutante"

(Cambridge)

WILLIAM Douglas Home has scored another big success with his new comedy which, though slender in its theme, is built

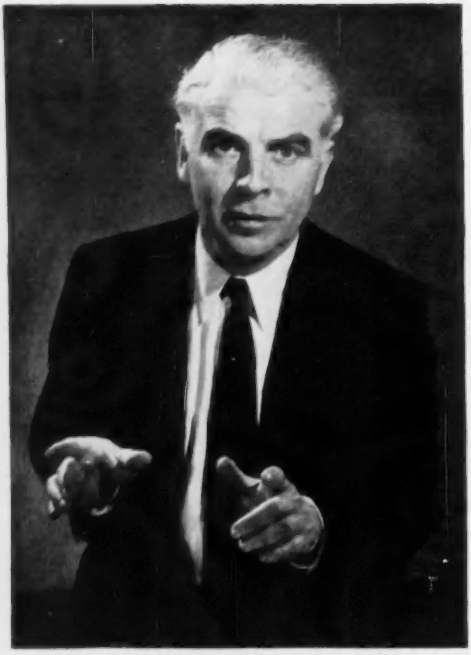
Anna Massey
daughter of Raymond Massey and Adrianne Allen, who has scored a big hit on the occasion of her first appearance in the West End.

on the lines English audiences adore. There are many witty lines but this kind of play always seems to get laughs for the asking, so that it could scarcely fail with the talent of Celia Johnson and Wilfrid Hyde White and the fresh charm of newcomer Anna Massey to put it over.

It is the story of a young debutante who

(Continued on page 10)

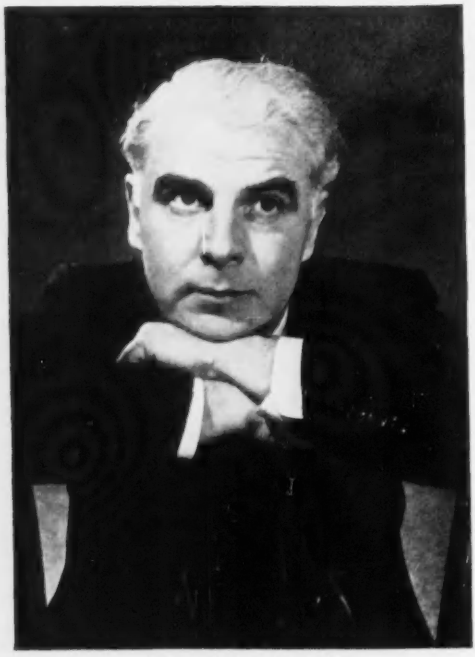
Emlyn Williams as Dylan Thomas Growing Up



" Early one momentous morning . . . "

A BARE stage, an ordinary chair backed by a nondescript screen bearing the rough signature "Dylan Thomas," and a few odd papers, are all the props that sustain Emlyn Williams in his brilliant one-man entertainment at the Globe Theatre. His Dickens programmes are not easily forgotten, but, though making no attempt to disguise himself as the poet, somehow on this occasion he comes nearer to identifying himself and us with the spirit of his remarkable fellow-countryman.

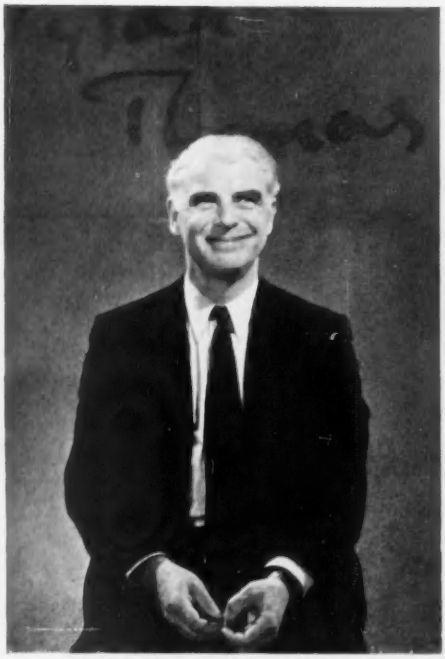
It is difficult to say who is owed more—Dylan by Emlyn or Emlyn by Dylan. But to Mr. Williams must go the credit for the clever selection and arrangement of material, so that if one's laughter is uproarious and astonishingly spontaneous, there are yet moments that bring us near to tears, as when the evening closes with the actor's moving rendering of the poem "And death shall have no dominion," on the final lines of which he slowly leaves the stage, leaving only the empty chair and a few papers as mute tribute to an amazing writer who died all too soon.



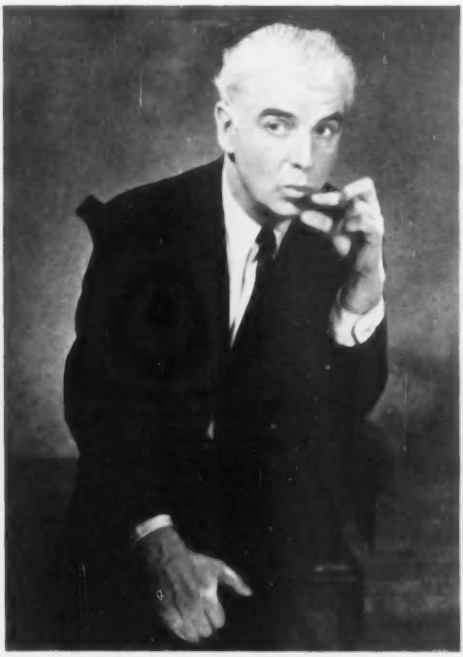
" I was staring him out."

Above, left: Mr. Williams begins Dylan Thomas's fantasy, unpublished in this country, called "Adventures in the Skin Trade," an hilarious item from the third part of the programme.

Left: A delightful moment from the endearing story called "The Fight," in which author and actor display amazing insight into a schoolboy's mind. This story is from *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*.



" He was smiling like a razor."



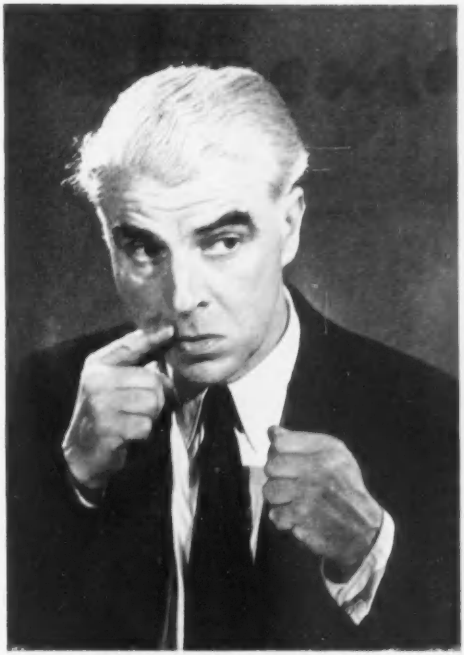
" Smoking the conscious Woodbine . . . "

Above: A delicious moment from "The Outing," taken from *A Prospect of the Sea*. This is an uproariously funny picture of Welsh life seen through the eyes of a little boy.

Pictures by Angus McBean

Above, right: A moment from "Self Portrait," from Dylan Thomas's devastating picture of himself as a youth in *Return Journey*.

Right: Another characteristic pose of Mr. Williams in "Adventures in the Skin Trade," the lurid story of young Dylan Thomas on the occasion of his leaving home for London and his adventures—highly fantastic and symbolic!—in the environs of Paddington Station.



" Lady, there's a wolf in the room . . . "

Diane Cilento

the young actress who has her first big West End part as Helen in "Tiger at the Gates" at the Apollo Theatre. Miss Cilento, who has already caused something of a stir in films, was previously seen on the London stage in "The Big Knife" at the Duke of York's and in "Arms and the Man" at the Arts Theatre.

"The Reluctant Debutante" *(Contd.)*

does not take kindly to the gruelling process of being "brought out," of her charming if somewhat foolish mother and of her long-suffering father who has to foot the bill. They take a flat in Town for the launching and in the effort to find Jane a partner among the eligible bachelors, Sheila Broadbent, the mother, encounters a young man with a "reputation." Jane fails to come home from the ball until the early hours, to the agonised anxiety of the parents, but all ends happily when David, the young man, proves that the scandal about him is false and also inherits a title (Italian) into the bargain.

Celia Johnson and Wilfrid Hyde White are splendid as the parents. Miss Johnson's performance is a model of brilliant timing which quite reconciles us to her having forsaken serious theatre for light comedy. Anna Massey emerges as a personality and her complete naturalness is something to be wondered at. There is another convincing performance from John Merivale as David and lively support from Ambrosine Phillpotts, Anna Steele, Jeremy Longhurst and Gwynne Whitby.

The play is directed by Jack Minster with setting by Hutchinson Scott. F.S.

"The Tempest" *(Open Air Theatre)*

THE heavens smiled on the opening of the new season in Regent's Park, but as the sun set and the wind rose one could not help wondering if the English climate is really suitable for open-air productions.

The natural setting is ideal for this play though one wished that the only piece of scenery not provided by nature could have been a little more substantial.

The production by David William is sound and contains only one staggering innovation. On the first night the pace was rather slow but this no doubt has been rectified by now.

The one great surprise was the Ariel of James Maxwell. Whether Mr. Maxwell or Mr. William is responsible for this is hard to tell. The result is horrifying. Ariel appears like a decomposing corpse wrapped, on his first entrance, in a mouldering shroud. Surely Prospero's "graves at my command have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let them forth—" is scarcely excuse enough for turning this airy spirit into a ghoul. However, within the limitations imposed, Mr. Maxwell did very well.

Robert Eddison makes a dignified and sonorous Prospero and June Bailey and Nicholas Amer as Miranda and Ferdinand are a charming pair of lovers.

Robert Atkins as Caliban, Jonathan Meddings as Trinculo and Russell Thorndike as Stephano add greatly to the evening's enjoyment. L.M.

"The Lost Generation" *(Garrick)*

IT is extraordinary how a play written with such sincerity could so fail to convince, but this is undoubtedly because of the lack of technical skill in the author, Patricia Hollender. The hero is Mark Astley (Michael Brill), a cynical young man who views war as merely the means to another experience. He is terribly burned, but survives to fight again only to lose his life during a raid. The other characters in the play are merely of passing interest and not all the skill of Nora Swinburne, John Stuart, Elsie Randolph, Leslie Phillips, Gladys Henson, Helen Macklin and Cameron Paul could breathe real life into these stock figures. Michael Brill, in the difficult part of Mark, proved himself a young actor to watch for the future. The play was directed by Leslie Linder. F.S.

"Tiger at the Gates" *(Apollo)*

THE French preoccupation with Greek mythology brings us another and most telling example in the Giraudoux play which was written in 1935. Christopher Fry's translation is monumental and witty at the same time, and, taking into account the brilliant acting of Michael Redgrave as Hector, this is without doubt a most distinguished piece of theatre and one not to be missed.

Tiger at the Gates abounds in scintillating talk and there is little action until inevitable Fate builds up the odds against Hector in a scene of mounting tension which ends in the death of Ajax and the unleashing of the war the former had striven to avoid.

Apart from Mr. Redgrave, whose performance in his long and onerous rôle approaches perfection, there are compelling performances from Walter Fitzgerald as Ulysses, John Laurie as Demokos, Catherine Lacey as Hecuba, Barbara Jefford as Andromache and Leüeen MacGrath as Cassandra. Leo Ciceri, looking every inch the part as Paris, was suitably unimpressed by the international upheavals laid at his door, but it is difficult to assess one's reactions to the performance of Diane Cilento as Helen. She certainly conveyed the amoral streak and presented a goddess-like mien, but there was no sense of that baffling timelessness which we felt the author had in mind.

Loudon Sainthill has come in for some criticism for his décor, but we liked its blue and gold clarity and sense of elevation. Harold Clurman's direction cleverly implied a sense of movement which in fact does not exist in a play of such lengthy and closely reasoned dialogue. F.S.

"The Legend of Pepito"
(Theatre Royal, Stratford, E15)

ON 3rd June an augmented audience welcomed Theatre Workshop back to their base after their successes at the International Drama Festival in Paris. The occasion was the "world première" of *The Legend of Pepito* by Ted Allan, based on a short story by B. Traven. The material had the dimensions and texture of an anecdote. Pepito was a Mexican peon who excelled in making coloured baskets. A visiting American wanted to have baskets—Pepé's baskets—mass-produced for the New York market, but Pepé's simple love of his craft was too absolute for this scheme of industrialisation to be realised. Joan Littlewood produced in a square of strong light with invisible "props." Harry Corbett played Pepé with understanding. H.G.M.

Ruth Draper *(St. Martin's)*

ON the 6th June Miss Ruth Draper returned to the West End to give her thirty-fifth London season and it is to be hoped that those who have not yet seen this amazing artist will have hurried to do so.

Miss Draper's skill remains undimmed by time and her insight into human nature is quite astonishing. Few who have seen "An English House Party" will fail to be amused by her hostess or by her superb study of the hunting woman—how often we have seen their counterparts in everyday life. "Doctors and Diets" is by now well known and remains one of her happiest sketches. In "Three Women and Mr. Clifford" her art is such that we really come to know Mr. Clifford though we see him only through the eyes of his perfect secretary, his bored and unsatisfied wife (a beautifully observed and rather touching study), and the charming Mrs. Mallory, his mistress. As the peasant in "Vive La France," Miss Draper speaks entirely in French, but even those whose knowledge of the language is slight, cannot fail to be moved by this study of a young French woman saying goodbye to her husband about to sail across the Channel to join his countrymen in England. L.M.

Ruth Draper
the American diseuse, who is making a very welcome return to London at the St. Martin's.

"Mourning Becomes Electra" *(Arts)*

THE Arts are to be congratulated on their enterprise in reviving for a seven weeks season Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece, which still grips the imagination and holds the interest even when presented in its entirety of three plays lasting for a five-hour sitting. One's only criticism, which we realise the producer could scarcely avoid on account of the theatre's small stage, is that the play suffered unnecessarily from waits between scenes.

An excellent cast supported this grim version of the Greek tragedy, set by O'Neill at the time of the American Civil War. Mary Ellis wrung every emotion from the part of Christine Mannon (mother of Orin and Lavinia), who took a lover, and Mary Morris as the avenging daughter, though perhaps playing the opening scene in too tense a mood, developed the rôle with mounting power, giving one of the most brilliant performances of her career. Another performance that remains strongly in the memory is that of John Phillips in the shorter part of Ezra, Christine's granite-like husband, whom she poisons, and Ronald Lewis confirmed his earlier promise as Orin, Lavinia's nerve-wracked brother. Excellent too were Beckett Bould's rendering of Seth, the Mannon servant, and Joseph O'Conor's Adam Brant, Christine's ill-fated lover. Peter Hall directed and the settings were by Paul Mayo.

F.S.

"Moby Dick" *(Duke of Yorks)*

IT would be idle to maintain that the conventional three-act play is the only offering for the "straight theatre," and though *Moby Dick* as presented defies description you are likely to be fascinated by this staging of the impossible. Unless, of course, you prove to be a fish out of water and thoroughly bored!

Orson Welles
returned to the London stage as author, star and producer of "Moby Dick" at the Duke of York's.

For this writer Orson Welles' superhuman achievement had a mesmeric quality nearer the effect of ballet than drama. Perhaps, indeed this is a ballet with words, and the association of William Chappell with the production gave sanction to the idea. Orson Welles, towering over all, presents the play as a late nineteenth-century rehearsal in a provincial American theatre and thus at once leaps the barrier of ship and ocean and Whale. That the audience's imagination responded magnificently to this astonishing man's impetus was obvious by the prolonged applause.

After Orson Welles one must praise Patrick MacGoohan who reveals depth and understanding in his quiet but strong Starbuck. This young actor, who recently made a deep impression in *Serious Charge*, has undoubted talent. Gordon Jackson, another young actor to watch, also gave an outstanding performance as Ishmael, the new deckhand and narrator and only survivor, and Peter Sallis was nimbly in evidence as Flask. Another clever character study came from Kenneth Williams as Elijah; the ship's carpenter and others, and Joan Plowright, the only actress in the company, played movingly the difficult rôle of Pip, the crazy negro cabin boy.

Don't listen to the critics but go and see this staging of Melville's novel which is acted by a splendid company, before it finishes its season on 9th July.

F.S.

Glyndebourne Coming of Age

FOR some time past Glyndebourne has been creating its new productions elsewhere; thus *The Rake's Progress* was first seen at Edinburgh, and this year's *Le Comte Ory* was also first delivered among the Scots. We Southerners have however had a "first night" to ourselves this season with a new production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the Italian Opera Buffa with which John Christie, C.H., opened Glyndebourne's doors twenty-one years ago. Glyndebourne being equated with Mozart, and Mozart being sold out, we were obliged to form our view of the quality of the production from a hearing of it broadcast in the Third Programme: for the lightweight opera in French, by Rossini, we were able to enjoy the work of the identical producer, conductor and designer (Messrs. Carl Ebert, Vittorio Gui and Oliver Messel) *de présence*. All the glamour attached to Glyndebourne was there, including the squatting picnicers on the lawns by the lakeside: lovely costumes and pretty (mediaeval) settings, sublime playing by the orchestra, rather less sublime singing, alas, on our night, and superlative staging.

Le Comte Ory, recently revived at the Florence Festival (in 1952), proved to be witty musically, though not "vintage" Rossini, and the longueurs of the stretched-out and far-fetched fable by Scribe, inspired it would seem by something out of Boccaccio or Rabelais, could only just be overlooked. Certainly the lusty singing of the male chorus masquerading as demure nuns pleased the audience.

OSSIA TRILLING.

(Pictures by Angus McBean)

Three scenes from the current revival of the Eugene O'Neill masterpiece. *Above left*: Mary Morris as Lavinia with the loyal Mannon servant, Seth Beckwith (Beckett Bould). *Above right*: Lavinia, knowing full well the real reason for his visits, listens to the insincere protestations of love by Adam Brant (Joseph O'Conor). *Right*: The dramatic scene following the death of Brant, Christine Mannon's lover, who was shot by Orin her son. During an hysterical scene with their mother (Mary Ellis) Lavinia brings her brother (Ronald Lewis) to heel with a sharp word of command eerily recalling their dead father.

"Mourning becomes Electra"

at the Arts Theatre

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Stratford Festival, 1955

LAURENCE OLIVIER as Macbeth. *(Angus McBean)*

● THE first three plays of the outstandingly successful season at Stratford-upon-Avon are reviewed and illustrated in the following pages. Laurence Olivier is giving one of the most brilliant performances of his career as Macbeth, most ably partnered by his wife, Vivien Leigh, as Lady Macbeth. Two more plays are to be added, "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (12th July) and "Titus Andronicus" (16th August), both likely to add further interest to what is probably the most popular season at the Memorial Theatre for some years.

Laurence Olivier as Malvolio in "Twelfth Night." He appears also as Macbeth and is later to be seen as Titus.

Vivien Leigh as Viola. Miss Leigh also plays Lady Macbeth and will be seen as Lavinia in "Titus Andronicus."

The First Three Plays

by Harold Matthews

IF last year's season was comparatively "starless," the present one dazzles with splendour and there is cause enough to make the babbling gossip of the air cry out "Olivier." Of the three plays now in the programme, *Macbeth* is the most important. For one thing, it is the only tragedy. Sir Laurence Olivier has the physique, the looks, the presence, the intelligence and the imagination for a fine, complete Macbeth and that is what we have from him. There is meaning in every phrase, every pause, every movement. Never are we left to fill in a gap ourselves. On the contrary, new aspects are disclosed. Sir Laurence captures the imagination completely and holds it and carries it along. This Macbeth is a revelation of an able man, tenacious of ambition, who plots his course and, once started, rushes all scruples. His is the boundless ambition that hides in a quiet exterior. His performance opens very quietly and he does not raise his voice until he is in his castle and the action of his plot has begun. This piano opening on the part of Sir Laurence gives the rest of the company a long start in the play's handicap. Banquo, played by Mr. Ralph Michael, appears to take the initiative when the two generals make their first appearance. At the same time, the quietness of Macbeth is suggestive of hidden depths. One is made to infer that Macbeth and Banquo are both ambitious and therefore wary of each other. Duncan's passive rôle in the campaign is a subject upon which they are in uneasy agreement.

Between Macbeth and his lady also, we are reminded, the removal of Duncan, or at least what might be done if he died, has been a frequent theme in talk and there is perfect understanding between them. So that this Macbeth is already the murderer of Duncan, save only that the deed is still to do, when we first meet him, withdrawn, dangerous and moody but well-mannered and subdued. He vacillates when the opportunity overtakes him but his wife promptly sets him on his course again.

After Macduff's arrival that fatal night, Macbeth comes from his chamber aloft garbed in a long, black, monkish gown, as if from some unholy rite, furtively inspecting his washed hands, and greets them in subdued tones, tacitly owning the presence of a corpse. We catch our breath and

Anthony Quayle (seen here in the 1951 "Henry IV") is to play Falstaff in "The Merry Wives" and Aaron in "Titus Andronicus."

Angela Baddeley is playing two rôles, Maria in "Twelfth Night" and Mistress Page in "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

think oddly that there is a taste of Dostoievsky about.

Another new flavour is the grim contempt, which seems to include himself and all the world as well as the men addressed, which he employs when he tests his hirelings and directs the killing of Banquo. Macbeth's fury with panic blended on seeing Banquo's ghost at his table and his complaint about the unreasonableness of the apparition carries all before it. We see his point of view. The curtain line before the second interval is given tremendous significance. Sir Laurence opens a vista with the words, "We—and it sounds the royal 'We'—are yet but young in deed." Our plots and assassinations are only a modest beginning. The initiate fear past, we shall release lethal forces unknown to ordinary men. And never in memory has the "Tomorrow" speech been given so much thoughtful depth and poetic meaning.

It is a particular satisfaction to see a dainty Lady Macbeth because the great Siddons maintained the fancy that Lady Macbeth should really be that type, "small, fair and blue-eyed; a fragile creature uniting physical charm with great strength of character." Miss Vivien Leigh shows how it can be done. Her Lady Macbeth is petite but queenly and her voice has when required the regal ring. There is at times a lyrical quality in her acting of the part as if the idea of being Queen of Scotland excites and exalts her. The alteration in her appearance for the sleep-walking scene, wherein she carries a light on a long stand, is rather unsettling, for not only is she then dowdily gowned but her dishevelled hair appears to have turned from auburn to mouse.

We are back to feminine witches. Attention is modestly called to this on the programme, where they are billed as "the weird sisters." When the curtain rises on Mr. Glen Byam Shaw's production, it is a raw and misty evening and three grey wraith-like crones appear to hover in foul and filthy air, as described in the text. Their later appearances are much more tangible and their magic appurtenances demand "as if" treatment.

Among the Scottish lords the beautiful voice of Mr. William Devlin is recognisable in the part of Ross. Young John Rogers dies well as Macduff's little boy and Miss Maxine Audley's shrieks as Lady Macduff prolong the scene after darkness has mercifully shut it out. Mr. Keith Michell's clear voice and straight figure sustain Macduff. Mr. Mervyn Blake speaks Old Siward's brief obsequy to his son impressively. There is little state about King Duncan's entourage and Malcolm and Donalbain look like two errand-boys. The final skirmishing is lively.

Mr. Roger Furse's scenery is ruggedly romantic and well supplies the impression of a northern castle of antique time.

A bold line has to be taken with *All's Well that Ends Well*. Mr. Noel Willman, who directs the play, must have decided. His experiment in taking it out of Boccaccio's time and re-setting it in the 17th century is fascinating in its outcome, renews interest in a not very popular comedy and results in an access of dignity to the action as well as to the stage pictures. Mr. Mariano Andreu supplies Watteau settings with lofty box-like trees clipped into square columns. The costumes recall Dumas' "Three Musketeers." Mr. Michael Denison with curls and moustache makes Bertram a very D'Artagan. The king's fistula is seated in his chest—a dignified lodgment—and Mr. Alan Webb as King of France bears a facial resemblance to Richelieu and is a gracious ruler mellowed by suffering. Lavache, clown to the Countess of Rousillon, not one of the more amusing of Shakespeare's clowns, becomes, by the amazing acrobatic skill of Mr. Edward Atienza, a dwarf to delight Velasquez. What he says is nothing beside the wonder that such a creature should be endowed with reason and speech. Another picturesque period touch is supplied by a ragged minstrel on the city wall at Florence turning an apparently genuine hurdy-gurdy.

Miss Rosalind Atkinson is kind and clear as the Countess. Where all is dignified, she appears in place as a great lady, not as a stray piece of gentility pathetically lonely. Parolles and his humour are given full effect in a study by Mr. Keith Michell. The scenes of his capture and exposure are very funny but the finest scene for humour, because more delicate, and less expected, is the one wherein the young courtiers of France are paraded before Helena. The dubiety of their expressions when rejected is very amusing, and Bertram's "Why pick on me?" reaction is a delicious climax. Miss Joyce Redman's Helena is rather superficial, though she registers sadness well at the opening.

Sir John Gielgud's production of *Twelfth Night* is notable for a new interpretation of Malvolio by Sir Laurence Olivier. As with

Left, top to foot **Joyce Redman as Helena in "All's Well," will also appear as Mistress Ford in "The Merry Wives." Alan Webb,** ***centre,*** **has already appeared as Sir Toby Belch and as the King of France and will be Dr. Caius in "The Merry Wives" and Lucius in "Titus." Michael Denison** ***(left)*** **as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, is Bertram in "All's Well," and will be seen as Marcus in "Titus Andronicus."**

Macbeth, Sir Laurence appears to modernise the character. Such creations are timeless and long outlive the generation that gives them birth, so there is justification for bringing them up to date or presenting them in any period. A "kind of Puritan," his plebeian accent and slight snuffle are very diverting. In the garden, he holds the stage, so that the capers and interjections of the Toby trio are the merest trimming, easily overlooked. His appearance cross-gartered has a surprise. He looks round a piece of scenery, so that only the upper half of his figure appears, and there he ogles Olivia. Later, when Sir Toby comes to take charge of him, he continues the comedy he has maintained in the garden. With his imprisonment the play loses much of its excitement. His final appearance is impressive and he shatters the company into a quick decision that he has been abused.

Miss Vivien Leigh is a trim, sprightly, wide-eyed and beautiful Viola, with many restful and lovely poses. With the poetry, she is at her best with the "reverberate hills" speech. The soliloquy after her first visit to Olivia has new treatment, the opening sentence, "I left no ring with her," being shouted after Malvolio.

Mr. Michael Denison takes Sir Andrew Aguecheek with speed and is funnier and more human than A.A. often is. Mr. Alan Webb makes Sir Toby a seedy gentleman, comparatively quiet but very acceptable. Mr. Edward Atienza in a subfusc overcoat, the new motley, Hotson style, sings pleasantly as Feste. Mr. Keith Michell's Orsino

(Concluded on page 47)

Above, L to R

Maxine Audley as Olivia is also playing Lady Macduff and Tamora in "Titus." Keith Michell, seen here as Parolles, is also appearing as Macduff, Orsino and Ford in the "Merry Wives," and Rosalind Atkinson, seen in the rôle of the Countess of Rousillon in "All's Well," will play Mistress Quickly in the "Merry Wives," the Nurse in "Titus" and is the Gentlewoman in "Macbeth."

Above, right

Ralph Michael in the rôle of Lafeu in "All's Well that Ends Well," is also appearing as Banquo in "Macbeth," and is to be seen as Page in the "Merry Wives" and Bassianus in "Titus." William Devlin, seen here as Antonio in "Twelfth Night," is also playing the rôle of Ross in "Macbeth," and will be Sir Hugh Evans in the "Merry Wives."

The opening scene of *Twelfth Night*. Orsino, Duke of Illyria (Keith Michell, *centre*), plunged into melancholy by his unrequited love for the Countess Olivia, receives news from Valentine (Gabriel Woolf) that the lady will none of him. Also, *right*, are Richard Coe as Curio and Emrys James as a courtier. *Below, left*: Viola (Vivien Leigh), shipwrecked and cast ashore in Illyria, is comforted by the sailors who shared her fate. *Below, right*: A scene in Olivia's house. Malvolio (Laurence Olivier), the steward, tells his mistress that a young man is demanding to see her and will not go away. Also in the picture are Feste (Edward Atienza), Maria, Olivia's woman (Angela Baddeley) and ladies-in-waiting (Dilys Hamlett and Mary Law).

"Twelfth Night"

● SCENES from the opening play of the 1955 Season. Directed by John Gielgud, the scenery and costumes are designed by Malcolm Pride with music by Leslie Bridgewater. The lighting is by Peter Streuli and fights arranged by Bernard Hepton and John Greenwood. The first performance of "Twelfth Night" was given on 12th April.

Top: Olivia is astonished when confronted by Malvolio ridiculously cross-gartered. Maria, instigator of the practical joke, can scarcely suppress her amusement. *Centre*: The hilarious fight between Sir Andrew and Viola (*L to R*: Lee Montague as Fabian, Michael Denison as Sir Andrew, Alan Webb as Sir Toby and Vivien Leigh as Viola). *Right*: The final scene of the play, with, *extreme left*, Trader Faulkner as Sebastian.

"All's Well that Ends Well"

● **DIRECTED by Noel Willman, the scenery and costumes are designed by Mariano Andreu with music by Antony Hopkins, dance movements arranged by Gera Rink and lighting by Peter Streuli. The first performance was on 26th April.**

Left: Lavache, the clown (Edward Atienza), the Countess (Rosalind Atkinson) and Rinaldo, her steward (Geoffrey Bayldon), in an early scene in the play.

Above: Helena (Joyce Redman) is brought to the court by Lafeu (Ralph Michael). She claims to be able to cure the King (Alan Webb). Also in the picture, left and right of the King, are Mervyn Blake and David King as Chamberlains. *Left*: Restored in health the King promises Helena anything she wishes. She asks for the hand in marriage of Bertram, the son of the Countess. But this arrogant young man (Michael Denison, *left*) refuses to comply.

Ordered by the King to marry Helena, Bertram is nevertheless determined to escape this fate. He finds the boasting Parolles a ready sympathiser and they both determine to go off to the wars. (Keith Michell as Parolles).

On his travels in Italy Bertram falls in love with Diana, an attractive young girl in Florence (Jill Dixon), to whom Helena turns for help.

Below: The amusing scene in which Parolles is gulled by Bertram and his fellow officers. *L to R*: Captain Dumain (Hugh Cross), Bertram, Dumain's brother (Patrick Wymark), Parolles, and Morgan, a soldier (Lee Montague).

"Macbeth"

● **FIRST performed on 7th June, the play is directed by Glen Byam Shaw with scenery and costumes designed by Roger Furse. The music is by Antony Hopkins with fights arranged by Bernard Hepton and John Greenwood, and lighting by Peter Streuli.**

Left: A scene showing Maxine Audley as Lady Macduff with her two sons, John Rogers and Philip Thomas. *Below*: Macduff (Keith Michell) receives the terrible news of the murder of his wife and children. (*Centre*: Trader Faulkner as Malcolm and *right*, William Devlin as Ross).

Our cover picture this month portrays Vivien Leigh as Lady Macbeth, which part Miss Leigh is playing for the first time in her career. Laurence Olivier, who is appearing as Macbeth for the first time since his much-praised performance at the Old Vic eighteen years ago, is seen in the rôle in the opening page of this feature. As we go to press, we hear that Frank Thring joins the Company on 18th July for the rehearsals of *Titus Andronicus* in which he is to play the part of Saturninus.

Peggy Ashcroft and John Gielgud in "Much Ado About Nothing"

Portrait by Angus McBean

● THE touring Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Company, led by John Gielgud and Peggy Ashcroft, opened to a resounding success at Brighton on 6th June with *Much Ado About Nothing*, followed on the 13th by *King Lear*. The Company are now on the Continent but return to London for a ten weeks season at the Palace Theatre, commencing 21st July. Also appearing with Miss Ashcroft and Mr. Gielgud in these two highly contrasted plays are Moira Lister, George Devine, Helen Cherry, Anthony Ireland, Anthony Nicholls, Raymond Westwell, Harold Lang, David O'Brien and Judith Stott. *Much Ado* is a revival of John Gielgud's Stratford production decorated by Mariano Andreu—a proved success, and great interest attaches to the entirely new production of *Lear* with its décor by the Japanese sculptor, Isamu Noguchi.

Matchless Mrs Siddons

HAROLD MATTHEWS PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT ACTRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE BI-CENTENARY OF HER BIRTH

"WELL, perhaps in the next world women will be more valued than they are in this." Mrs. Siddons is reported to have remarked to Samuel Rogers at the public dinner given to her brother, John Philip Kemble, on his retirement in 1816. There had been less fuss four years earlier when she retired and one can understand the sisterly sigh of jealous irritation. If her spirit still cares, she has reason to be satisfied, for this present world places her first among the stately Kembles. The remark was uncharacteristic for family feeling was strong in Sarah Siddons and her brother received a full share of her devotion.

She was born on 5th July, 1755, at Brecon, the eldest child of Roger Kemble and his wife, Sarah, née Ward, the daughter of that John Ward who, nine years earlier, performed *Othello* in the Town Hall at Stratford-upon-Avon and gave the entire receipts to pay for the repainting of Shakespeare's effigy in the church in its original colours. Theatrical tradition was banked up behind her and Sarah took her place early in the family company at a favourable time for the profession. From the age of 4, with a drum on her head, she led the procession of the players through the towns and villages in her father's circuit. And all her life she continued, even after the need was said not to exist, to appear and perform so that her family might have bread and other requirements.

At 15 Sarah was in love with William Siddons, a young man in her father's company who was also very much in love with her. Fair and handsome and a remarkably quick study, Siddons was a useful member of a peregrinating repertory company but he was never brilliant or profound. Mr. and Mrs. Kemble decided to separate the young people and Sarah was sent to stay with Mrs. Greatheed in some undefined but almost certainly subservient capacity, at Guy's Cliffe, Warwick. Already her personal distinction was impressive and there are stories of visitors rising in a flutter when she entered the room. The two years passed at Guy's Cliffe did nothing to diminish the attachment between Sarah and William, who came several times to visit her. Indeed, after this long period away from the stage, Sarah was determined on two points. She would be an actress and she would marry Mr. Siddons. Her parents gave way and the wedding took place at Trinity Church, Coventry, on 26th November, 1773.

While still a girl, Sarah had recited before Garrick and been commended by him for lack of provincialism. Now in her 21st year, with a husband and two children to think of, she decided to apply to the great man again, before he retired from the stage. Receiving a favourable report from Rev. Bate, one of his scouts, Garrick invited her to Drury Lane, billed her as "a young lady" and presented her in the part of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* on Friday, 29th December, 1775. In poor health and extremely nervous, she made but a poor impression but she stayed for the season, her best part being Lady Anne to Garrick's Richard III. Garrick's company was strong on the female side and a new young actor would have been more welcome to the town. Sarah was competing with Miss Younge and Mrs. Yates, who met all the demands of tragedy and sober comedy, and with Mrs. Abington, supreme in light comedy. Garrick gave his own farewell performance in June, 1776, and Sheridan, taking over, did not require the services of the young Mr. and Mrs. Siddons. They toured again, visiting Birmingham, Manchester (where Sarah appeared as Hamlet) and finally York, whence she was invited to Bath, at that time a social centre second only to the capital. On her way to Bath, in 1779, at the Bear Inn, Devizes, she was sketched by the 10-year-old son of the landlord, young Thomas Lawrence, the first of many portraits this artist was to make of her.

A Bath she remained three years, working every night either at Bath or Bristol, and eclipsed all rivals. When a second invitation to Drury Lane arrived, she was so firmly rooted in the affection of her Bath public that she felt impelled to make an impressive and explanatory farewell. She recited some verses of her own composition and brought on from the wings her three young children as three compelling reasons for removing to the more lucrative boards of "the Lane."

After but two rehearsals there, which left her hoarse and a prey to nerves, Mrs. Siddons faced her first night on 10th

October 1782. She wrote in her memoirs, "I made my first new appearance at Drury Lane with my own dear beautiful boy, then but 8 years old, in Southerne's tragedy of *Isabella*. This character was judiciously recommended to me by my kind friend Mr. Sheridan, the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who had seen me in that play at Bath. The interest he took in my success was like that of a father." This verse drama can still be read with enjoyment, if a copy can be found, but the effect obtained with it by Mrs. Siddons is the measure of her genius. The audience was swamped in its own emotion and too prostrate at curtain fall to begin to express itself in applause. After a breathing space, they roused. Shouts and plaudits rent the building and were long continued. Half dead, as she says, Mrs. Siddons reached her own fireside, her joy and thankfulness too great for words or even tears. *Isabella* was repeated seven times in three weeks and Mrs. Siddons was given the "star" dressing-room on the stage-floor, formerly Garrick's. She was also given a purse of 100 guineas by "the whole body of the Law."

Sarah Siddons
(From the painting by Gainsborough)

For twenty years Mrs. Siddons remained at Drury Lane, melting audiences with such plays as *The Grecian Daughter* by Arthur Murphy and *The Stranger* translated from the German of Kotzebue, and it is by reason of her performance as Lady Macbeth that her glory lives with us still to-day. That seems to be the only character we can now equate with Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Tragic Muse" portrait. Her Lady Macbeth was a new study, freshly imagined, and its effect was electrifying and enduring. After seeing her performance, Byron heard her voice whenever he read the play.

When Drury Lane was closed, or when Sheridan withheld salaries for a longer time than usual with him, Mrs. Siddons toured the United Kingdom indefatigably to provide for her family and her old age. But she commanded high fees and some managers and many provincial players took a poor view of this "wholesale sweeping of their meagre pastures," since the theatre would be more than half empty for a long time after the "star" had departed.

In 1802, Kemble, unable to get his money from the elusive Sheridan, threw up the stage-managership of Drury Lane Theatre and the following year Mrs. Siddons went with her brother to Covent Garden. Kemble had gone into management there and for years his love of order was now comforted; for six years, to be exact. Owing to Sheridan's witticism on the occasion, everybody knows that Drury Lane Theatre was burned down in 1802 and Sheridan ruined. Lacking a jest, it is less frequently remembered that, in 1808, Covent Garden Theatre had also been burned down and the Kembles ruined. The Kembles made a better recovery than did Sheridan. For one thing, Kemble retained control of the enterprise. A subscription was at once opened, which brought in £75,000, and a new building, costing four times as much as that, was ready in a year. In order to bridge the financial gap, it was decided to raise the price of the seats. *Macbeth* was chosen to open the new theatre and there was a full house. The orchestra played the National Anthem to begin with and the audience loyally joined in. Then Kemble came on to deliver a prepared address. He was howled down. He abandoned his address and the play began. No player was allowed a hearing. Pandemonium prevailed in front, which from time to time resolved itself into raucous, rhythmic chanting of "O.P." and it became evident that there was a planned demonstration for the restoration of the "old prices" of the seats. Whenever a lull occurred, the voices of the actors could be heard going steadily through their parts. Mrs. Siddons' musical voice in particular was noted. Such breaks were

(Continued on page 36)

Whispers from the Wings by Looker-on

Nigel Patrick

A BIGAMIST could be a very ugly customer, but when he happens to bear the name of Mr. Pennypacker, as well as a strong physical resemblance to Nigel Patrick, he becomes an exception to the rule and despite having two wives, he turns out to be an irresistible charmer, capable of captivating the most bigoted of reproachers.

The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker, which has been drawing near-capacity audiences to the New Theatre in spite of the dislocation caused by the rail strike, provides Nigel Patrick with the plummiest part of his career. Mr. Pennypacker lives in Wilmington, Delaware, where he has a wife and seven splendid children; his prosperous business obliges him to spend a good deal of time in Philadelphia, where he has yet another wife and seven more splendid children. All goes well for twenty years and everyone is happy until the eldest daughter in Delaware decides to marry a young curate. This action exposes her father's unconventional past and provides the American playwright, Liam O'Brien, with unusual material for an entertaining comedy.

Nigel Patrick fell in love with the character as soon as he read the script. In spite of being a bigamist, Mr. Pennypacker is such a likeable fellow; even when his wife in Delaware learns of the other family in Philadelphia, she is the first to maintain that he has always been a good husband and an excellent father. Most men commit bigamy either for money or because they prefer one woman to another. Not Mr. Pennypacker; he has enough money to support two wives, two homes and fourteen children. Furthermore there is no question of liking one wife more than the other; he is devoted to both and treats them fairly and equally.

Free thinking is responsible for Mr. Pennypacker's double marriage. His own conscience is perfectly clear and in his own mind there is no question of having double-crossed either wife. Morality, as he so wisely observes, is closely concerned with geography. It permits the Mohammedan any number of wives, but no alcohol; yet the American is allowed only one wife, but all the whisky necessary to endure a monogamous state. Mr. Patrick found this original twist in the Pennypacker train of thought most endearing.

Furthermore, he was attracted by a play teeming with "thundering nice people." He is convinced that audiences like agreeable characters and *The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker* presents a dozen or more people one would be happy to know, in a situation that brings out the best in each of them. It is a good team play and not a star vehicle for a leading man or woman; everyone has a moment worth waiting for.

Regarded quite seriously, the plot is feasible enough. If one accepts the fact that during her twenty years of married life, the Delaware Mrs. Pennypacker never at any time suggested she would like to accompany her husband on one of his business trips to Philadelphia, then all is plain sailing and the story could quite easily have happened. Naturally it could only have happened in the gay 'Nineties. In this modern age of easy travel, telephones, radio and television, one of the children would have soon spotted what was happening.

The author has written a play that is a witty combination of high comedy and absolute sincerity. The best laughs arise spontaneously out of the sincerity of the lines and the genuine thought behind them. If the actor playing Mr. Pennypacker consciously played for laughs the character would lose its charm and become slick and artificial. Mr. Patrick's refreshing performance is dominated by this principle and his individual approach to the part makes it all the more acceptable in these times of industrial unrest and international uncertainty, when laughter is more welcome than ever.

"The Lark" at the Lyric, Hammersmith

Joan: Bring two horses into the courtyard and we'll gallop them together. If I fall off, you can lose faith in me. Is that fair? Agreed?

Joan (Dorothy Tutin) bargains with Beaudricourt (David Bird). An early scene in the play.

Below:

Promoter: You should have cried: Vade retro Satanus!

Joan: I don't know Latin, my Lord.

Promoter: Don't be an idiot! The devil understands French! You should have cried: Get thee behind me, foul Satan, and don't tempt me again.

A moment during the re-enactment of the trial. *L to R*: Promoter (Leo McKern); Ladvenu (Michael David); Joan of Arc; Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais (Laurence Naismith); Inquisitor (Michael Goodliffe); and Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (Richard Johnson).

(Pictures by Angus McBean)

● **SCENES from Peter Brook's production of Jean Anouilh's play in the excellent translation by Christopher Fry. The scenery and costumes are based on designs from Jean-Denis Malclès. The play, which was reviewed in our last issue, is one of the most important productions seen at the Lyric, Hammersmith, where it continues its run.**

Charles: What do you want with me mademoiselle? *Joan*: Gentle Dauphin, I am called Joan the Maid. God has brought me to you, to tell you that you will be anointed and crowned in the city of Rheims.

Joan instantly identifies the Dauphin in the crowded Court. Included *L to R*: Archbishop (John Gill), La Tremouille (Peter Cellier), La Hire (George Murcell), the Dauphin (Donald Pleasence), and a Page (David Spenser).

Below: *Charles*: I suppose now you have to start boring me. You're going to tell me to become a great king.

Joan begins her task of rousing the Dauphin to his responsibilities.

Below: *Joan*: Great jackass! Big blockhead! Old pudding head! Paradise is crowded with silly fools! Our Lord said so. It may be they're the only ones who get in.

Joan with La Hire in a scene in Act II.

Joan: I'm not alone there. *Promoter*: Well? You're not alone there. Well? What of that? *Joan*: The English soldiers are on guard in the cell, all through the day, and all through the night. *Promoter*: Well, do you mean to go on? Your powers of invention have failed you already, is that it? I should have thought the devil was more ingenious! You feel that you've been caught out my girl, and it makes you blush.

Another glimpse of the trial. The Promoter taunts Joan.

Inquisitor: However powerful we become one day in one shape or another, however inexorably the Idea shall dominate the world, however rigorous, precise and subtle its organisation and its police, there will always be a man who has escaped, a man to hunt, who will presently be caught, presently be killed; a man who, even so, will humiliate the Idea at the highest point of its Power, simply because he will say "No" without lowering his eyes.

The Inquisitor, silent till now, indulges in his first flight of rhetoric.

Joan: Do I make a circle or a cross? I can't write my name.

Ladvenu: I will guide your hand.

Joan, worn out by the ceaseless questioning, capitulates.

Above: Agnes: Even her little Majesty will help. She has just given him a second son. It is all she can do, but she does it very well.

The Ladies of the Court visit Joan in prison. The Dauphin looks on. *L to R:* Agnes Sorel, mistress to the Dauphin (Hazel Penwarden); the young Queen (Catherine Feller) and Queen Yolande, the Dauphin's mother-in-law (Lucienne Hill).

Soldier: She's got a right to a cross, like anybody else.
Promotor: She is a heretic! I forbid you to give it to her.

The dramatic enactment of the burning. Included in the picture are Norman Scace as the Soldier and Gareth Jones as the Hangman. The play, which is presented in a series of flashbacks, ends triumphantly with the Coronation of Charles.

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THE LARK

'In my opinion this is the best play about Joan of Arc which the English theatre has seen. It is translated with touching and alert loyalty.'

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Read Christopher Fry's translation of Jean Anouilh's play. It costs 8s. 6d., and is published by Methuen.

Prince: How now, wool-sack! what mutter you!
Falstaff: A King's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects before thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You, Prince of Wales!

Paul Rogers as Falstaff and Robert Hardy as Prince Hal in an early scene.

Prince: Do not think so; you shall not find it so:
And God forgive them, that so much have sway'd
Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!
I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
And in the closing of some glorious day
Be bold to tell you that I am your son.

Prince Hal with his father King Henry (Eric Porter).

"King Henry IV" - Part I

● **SCENES from the closing two plays of the Old Vic Season. First produced on the 27th and 28th April last, these productions proved the most successful of this year's repertoire and were a splendid tribute to the brilliant direction of Douglas Seale of Birmingham Repertory.**

Glendower: She bids you
Upon the wanton rushes lay you down
And rest your gentle head upon her lap.

L to R: Anthony White as Mortimer, Virginia McKenna as Lady Mortimer, Meredith Edwards as Glendower, Paul Daneman as Worcester, John Neville as Hotspur and Ann Todd as Lady Percy.

Falstaff: Farewell hostess; farewell, Doll. You see, my good wenches, how men of merit are sought after; the undeserver may sleep when the man of action is called on. Farewell, good wenches. If I be not sent away post, I will see you again ere I go.

L to R: Rachel Roberts as Mistress Quickly, Paul Rogers as Falstaff and Gwen Cherrell as Doll Tearsheet.

Falstaff: Boot, boot, Master Shallow. I know the young king is sick for me.

L to R: John Neville as Pistol and Paul Daneman as Shallow are urged by Falstaff to return quickly to London on the news of the King's death.

"King Henry IV" - Part 2

DECOR and costumes for the two productions were by Audrey Cruddas, with music composed by Christopher Whelen. Following the end of the season on 11th June, the Company left for a visit to Ireland with "Macbeth" and "As You Like It."

King Henry V: I know thee not, old man: fall to
thy prayers;
How ill white hairs become
a fool and jester!

The closing scene of the play. Included *left* are, Ronald Fraser as Bardolph, Job Stewart as Davy, Meredith Edwards as Silence and, *extreme right*, John Woodvine as Lord Chief Justice.

Echoes from Broadway

New York Plays reviewed by our American Correspondent Mawby Green

Stephen Douglass and Gwen Verdon as they appear in "Damn Yankees."
(Picture by Talbot)

ALTHOUGH baseball is America's national sport, it has never served as subject matter for a successful Broadway play. The theory behind this is that while it is the men who attend the ball games, it is the women who pick out the plays their men shall see. If any show breaks this rule, it will be the new musical comedy, *Damn Yankees*. But even here the going has not been easy despite overall favourable notices. True, capacity audiences have been the rule since the opening but the advance sale was much too weak for a smash hit, so much so that an immediate change in the advertising took place. Instead of using for its trade mark the picture of its star, Gwen Verdon, in baseball cap and shirt, Miss Verdon is now smiling out at the readers in her sexiest, skin tight costume. If this does not lure them in, nothing will.

Yes, this is the same Gwen Verdon who is having movie censor trouble both here and in Britain for her dance sequence in *Gentlemen Marry Brunettes*. Her routines in *Damn Yankees*, the highspot of the entertainment, are all temperature raisers but never in any way offensive, for sex with Miss Verdon is never unadulterated but always generously diluted with humour. By critics and audiences alike she is adored, and has walked off with top honours, turning what is essentially a secondary rôle into the whole show.

It is this unbalance which mitigates most against *Damn Yankees*, for the book by George Abbott and Douglas Wallop, based on Mr. Wallop's novel, *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant*, is intended to concentrate interest on the middle-aged fan who sells his soul to the devil so he may become young again, play ball, and bring his home team, always in last place, to number one position and the pennant. While accomplishing this minor miracle, there are long stretches while the rejuvenated hero goes about sentimentally yearning for his greying spouse, during which the audience keeps waiting impatiently for the next assault on his impregnable virtue by the devil's assistant, the devastating Miss Verdon.

Two songs by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross have already become big juke box favourites: "Whatever Lola Wants" and "Heart," but on the whole, the music and lyrics are not too impressive as a show score. The direction, choreography, cast, settings and costumes are slickly professional in the manner so greatly admired.

After receiving one of the worst critical drubbings of the year, the sponsors of *Ankles Aweigh* found themselves getting all-out support from leading television performers and Broadway columnists, who are determined to turn this dreary musical into a hit. So far business has been better than anyone dared hope but still a good deal less than the sellout the columnists keep insisting the show is doing. The theory behind this is that New Yorkers only want to see the shows they cannot get tickets for.

An incredible hodgepodge dealing with a motion picture company on location in Italy, its star, who is trying to consummate her recent marriage to a navy lieutenant, and a nest of dastardly spies. *Ankles Aweigh* is intended to bring back the good old days of the American musical comedy, the days before the *Oklahoma!* revolution, the days of *Panama Hattie* and *Follow the Girls*. So impossible did this become in the execution that the authors, obviously in desperation, hastily stuck into the second act a reference that *Ankles Aweigh* should be taken as satire just like *The Boy Friend*. Nobody believed them for a moment.

Starring in this shambles, for everything else about the show is on a par with its book, are Betty and Jane Kean, a very popular night club team.

A musical version of the celebrated Austin Strong play, *Seventh Heaven*, has not met with much more enthusiasm, although here again there are some die-hard columnists still working at becoming hit-makers. The theory behind this is that if *Can-Can* and *Kismet* could become hits all on their own, imagine what can happen to any musical *with* columnists' support. What is overlooked is the fact that if the word-of-mouth is bad, nothing can save the show.

Instead of wallowing in the romantic sentimentality of the original, the authors in modernising *Seventh Heaven* have substituted what they consider a more saleable quality—sex. The time is still 1914-1918 and the pathetic little waif, Diane, believe it or not, has now become a prostitute. She doesn't want to sell her body but if she is to hold her job as entertainer in the toughest bar in Montmatre, what's a girl to do?

To play this rôle, screen actress Gloria de Haven was brought on from the coast and her saleable item is her looks. As an actress she displays little talent for the stage, and here again, believe it or not, with the aid of microphones, she sings all her songs in 1955 night club style. Her co-star, Ricardo Montalban, is another coast import and he plays, Chico, King of the Paris Sewers, with considerable virility and vitality, if not much variety.

On the credit side, there are immensely likeable performances by the diminutive French singing star, Robert Clary, and two dancing comediennes, Chita Rivera and Patricia Hammerlee, who should become familiar faces on the Broadway scene.

The off-Broadway Phoenix Theatre, after an unprofitable season with the classics, is salvaging itself with a clever revue, *Phoenix '55*, starring Nancy Walker. This comedienne, whose career has been a series of ups-and-downs, is once again smack on a high, winning superlative notices for her brilliant clowning. She is seen as the winner of a national baking contest; the premiere ballerina in a modern ballet of the "Age of Anxiety" school; the worn-out, beery mother of 27 children in 17 years, among others, and in each item she is hilarious, going aggressively into battle with some phase of modern living, only to give up with a shrug of her shoulders at its absurdity.

Below—**Gloria de Haven and Ricardo Montalban in "Seventh Heaven."**

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"Uncertain Joy"

THIS new play by Charlotte Hastings, author of "Bonaventure," originally opened at the Royal Court on 31st March last and was transferred to the Duchess on 20th June. It tells the story of a maladjusted boy, befriended by a schoolmaster, whose wife at first actively resents her husband's preoccupation with the lad. The play is produced by Warren Jenkins with setting by Fanny Taylor, and the cast, headed by Roger Livesey and Ursula Jeans, bring much human interest to this problem play with a topical flavour.

Above left: An incident in the first act. Ursula Jeans is seen as Barbary Leigh, the successful and ambitious novelist, with Roger Livesey as her schoolmaster husband, Stephen. Tod (Michael Brooke) the rebellious child of a neighbour has just upset some coffee over her new dress in a fit of uncontrolled temper.

Pictures by Armstrong Jones

Left: Mrs. Blundell (Marda Vanne), another neighbour, who believes there is nothing so good as a sound hiding, brings in a furiously struggling Tod. He has just broken one of the french windows with his catapult.

Tod, whose young life has been spent trailing from country to country with his unscrupulous father, Giovanni Dawson, gets little sympathy from him when he tries to protest over the drowning of his pet cat. (Richard Leech as Giovanni).

Stephen, who wants to adopt the boy, in spite of his wife's protests, tells Giovanni that he will start legal proceedings against him for cruelty. Giovanni, his dubious career already forcing him to move on, angrily agrees to leave his son in Stephen's care.

Eighteen months later, Tod is still living with the Leighs and the adoption is nearly through. Tod and Stephen are by now good friends but an uneasy truce persists between the boy and Barbary. Later that evening an unpleasant shock awaits them. Giovanni returns from America with a new wife and demands the return of his son, who, overhearing this, decides to run away. But fearing his father will harm Stephen's career, Tod eventually goes to his father.

Left: The scene, two months later, when Tod returns unexpectedly, dripping wet and too frightened to speak. The Leighs, realising that he is in a state of shock, put him to bed immediately.

Below: Birch, a detective (Robert Raglan), is inquiring for Tod but at first Barbary denies he is in the house as they are now determined to keep him. But Birch finds Tod's wet shoes and it now transpires that the boy is wanted following the sudden death of his father. It would be unfair to divulge how the suspicion of murder against Tod is finally disposed of. Sufficient to say all ends happily for the unfortunate boy and his would-be foster parents.

Television's Trouper

by Eric Johns

Benny Hill

NOW that Benny Hill is star comedian in *Paris by Night*, the latest Folies Bergère revue at the Prince of Wales Theatre, millions who chuckled at his rolling eye on their television screens imagine his career to have been one of those over-night success stories that are often written about in the popular Press, but never occur in real life.

To use his own phrase, Benny was always "nuts about the theatre," and was the Boy Wonder of Southampton, long before he was old enough to take up a professional career. He used to appear at school concerts and could always be relied upon to make social functions at the working men's clubs go with a swing. He learned to play the guitar, then bought himself a drum and sang with local dance bands. Show business got a real hold on him and by the time he was sixteen he decided he must leave home to take his first steps towards making a West End career.

He sold his drum for £10 and made his way to London on the proceeds; though his father admired the boy's courage and initiative, he prophesied his return within a week. Benny had more faith in his own determination and without wasting any time, he started looking for work within an hour of arriving in London.

He called at one stage door after another, offering his services to the stage manager in any capacity, as long as he could become part and parcel of the show. Two days after coming to London he went to the Chelsea Palace where a Harry Benet revue, *Follow the Fun*, was running, with Hal Bryan and Ivy Luck in the cast. Benny implored the stage manager to take him on. "I'm better than Max Miller," he said, "and I don't want so much money!" Apart from being amused by the youngster's tremendous enthusiasm, the stage manager saw that Benny could be a genuine asset to the company. The war was at its height and it was difficult to get hold of young men who were not on the verge of being called up. Though Benny was only sixteen, he was a strapping young lad, obviously in excellent health, and capable of looking like a mature young man on the stage.

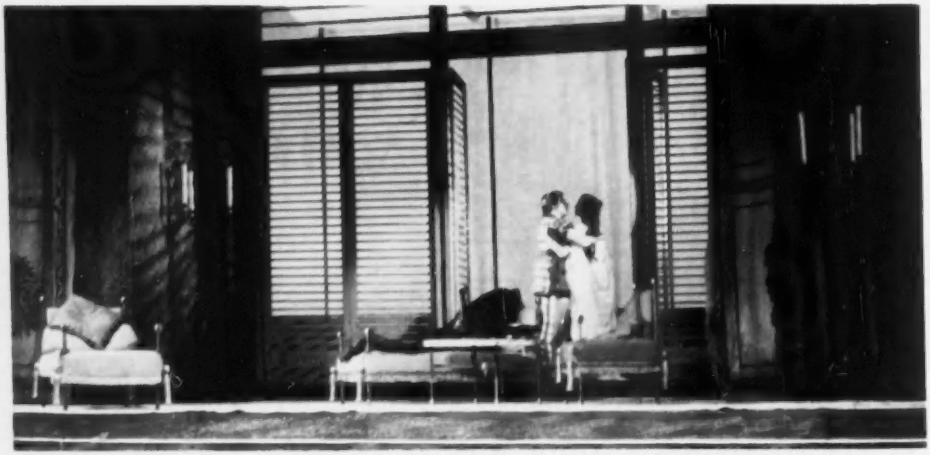
At a salary of £3 a week he was engaged on the spot and told to join the company as property man the following Monday at East Ham. He was a bit disappointed not to be given a part in the show and have his name on the programme, but even so, by the middle of the first week he had made his first appearance on the professional stage.

At one point in the show, Hal Bryan had some cross-talk with his stooge. The back-chat was essential because it led up to one of the big numbers in the show, but during the first house performance on the Wednesday evening, the stooge was nowhere to be found when his cue came round. Hal Bryan was alone on the stage, *ad libbing* for all he was worth, in the hope that his colleague would suddenly rush on to save the situation. Nothing happened. Benny was in the wings desperately anxious to help, but not knowing what to do. Seeing the look of despair on Hal Bryan's face, he took his courage in both hands and walked on. Under his breath Hal Bryan gave him the lines, which Benny took up and repeated as if he had been playing the scene for months. He saved the show and before Hal Bryan left the theatre that night he quietly slipped a ten shilling note into the boy's hand and whispered, "You're a trouper, my lad!"

As a result of this spectacular debut on the music hall stage, Benny took over small parts in sketches, appearing in turn as a white-face, a feed and a policeman. By the time he was seventeen he even stage-managed the show, when the official stage manager was suddenly called to London to be with his wife who was seriously ill. That was how Benny learned the ABC of his job and became a seasoned player before he went into the Army himself.

He did an enormous amount of radio work, particularly on *Variety Fanfare*, long before he was seen on television. Even on television his success was far from a sensational over-night leap to fame. In the two years prior to becoming the star of the Folies Bergère show, he made no less than twenty-six appearances on television, which made him known to millions and gave him a tremendous box office appeal before he reached the West End.

(Continued on page 46)



The lovers greet the dawn in Act II of "Troilus and Cressida." Since no historical records remain Sir Hugh Casson inevitably drew upon his imagination for this impressive Trojan interior. *(Picture by Houston-Rogers)*

14

Sir Hugh Casson

Creative Artists in the Theatre
by
Elizabethe H C Corathiel

WHILE the British theatre lags behind the Continent to some extent in the matter of mechanical stage equipment, the best London standard so far as actual settings—decor, properties and costuming—are concerned ranks pretty high. It may not be quite so adventurous as, let us say, Vienna, Paris, Munich, Bayreuth; but it is conscientious, stylish and certainly not cheap.

Our English custom (in contrast to that of some Continental subsidised theatres, where quite often skilled craftsmen, such as stage carpenters and scene painters, do all that is necessary) is to entrust artists of established reputation with this branch of stage work, and where progress towards the breaking of new ground may be traced, it owes its impetus quite often to creative decor, which in its turn represents, of course, the pooled ideas of author, producer and designer. In the main they are pictorially conceived, because of our present-day tendency to employ painters on the job—or at least painters who have drifted into stage-decor as a side-line.

Originally it was not so. In the great days of the Court Masque, when drama first began to emerge from the simplicity of the mediaeval mystery-play, stage decor involved sensational entrances and transformation scenes which eventually necessitated the use of quite elaborate mechanics. To think up such thrills and surprises for jaded courtiers was the responsibility of the Pageant Master who (as in the case of Inigo Jones) might also be a master-architect. Only a man skilled in all the intricacies of perspective, construction and mechanical engineering could be trusted to devise designs on which not only the final effect, but the actual safety of the players depended.

In calling upon Sir Hugh Casson to provide the settings for William Walton's opera, *Troilus and Cressida*, Covent Garden reverted to that tradition.

Once the decision to employ an architect rather than an artist had been made, the choice of Sir Hugh was an obvious one. His resounding success on South Bank in connection with the Festival of Britain, and the grandiose way in which he transformed London for Her Majesty the Queen's Coronation marked him out as the ideal man for the job. He has a natural flair for dramatic presentation, partly perhaps hereditary for, as a nephew of Sir Lewis Casson, stage traditions are as much in his blood as they are in his Thorndike and Casson cousins whom, physically and mentally, he so much resembles.

It is a coincidence that the first theatrical assignment which came Sir Hugh's way was also an opera with a classical setting—Gluck's *Alceste* at Glyndebourne in 1953. Although the severity of monumental structure has a great fascination for him, he is by no means wedded to it. The aspect which probably intrigues him most is the challenge to translate these long-dead stones into vivid, pulsating modern life, and in both these stage achievements the effort has succeeded triumphantly.

"Having worked intensively for many years in the field of exhibition and display," said Sir Hugh when I interviewed him, "I could approach without qualms the idea of my work for the stage being of quite an ephemeral nature. I was quite used to things being elaborately put up, only to be pulled down again when they had served their purpose. As an architect, it appeared to me that stage decor should be comparatively easy. Working to a strictly circumscribed frame, I cheerfully assumed the designer could impose conditions entirely to suit himself, deciding from which angle his work should be seen, the degree and character of light in which it should be shown and even perhaps the grouping of the colours and properties and the people seen against it. I was lulled by pleasant reflections that the architect of scenery need not trouble himself with such mundane matters as the masking of unattractive 'backs,' fire escapes, plumbing and so on; there were no pipe problems to be tidily solved, no cracks or stains to guard against. That was what I thought! It took very little time to convince me that the stage designer's work is not as simple as all that!

Having mastered the unfamiliar and somewhat terrifying jargon which passes for currency back-stage, I found that the limitations imposed by the demands of the producer, by the idiosyncracies of the singers, and by the heights and positions of stage equipment could be quite as cramping as questions of party-wall awards, damp penetration, clay sub-soil and other problems with which the architect's life bristles, and I found myself longing at times for the reassuring guidance of building bye-laws! However, the very challenge of the stage is to me always stimulating; life would be dull if every fresh task did not involve the finding of answers to new puzzles."

All this is very illuminating and goes to show that the architect approaches stage decor very much from the standpoint of a working design, which is not the way artistic directors usually work. Technicians both at Glyndebourne and at Covent Garden must have been a little taken aback by the issue of architects' working drawings for the sets. "There are gains and losses on both sides," said Sir Hugh. "The architect is more likely to see a set in architectural terms—steps, levels and adjustments to create an imposing effect in a space hemmed in by all kinds of material restrictions. As a result, his work *may* be less imaginative than a painter's, for the painter in all probability visualises a vital 'picture,'

(Continued on page 45)

Right. **Sir Hugh Casson's design for the "Alceste" set. This opera was the opening production of the 1953 Glyndebourne Season and was also Sir Hugh's first theatrical assignment.**

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leaving all kinds of practical problems in mid-air, and the stage technicians has to cope with the responsibility of working out the details as best he can.

"My chief concern in approaching both *Alceste* and *Troilus* was to avoid being over-archeological. An accurate reproduction of ancient monuments is boring and a classical pastiche can so easily degenerate into mere 'prettiness.'"

So, while going to classical sources for inspiration, Sir Hugh infuses them with contemporary impressionism. He considers skeletal structures outlined against the cyclorama very evocative although, unless they are treated with great dignity, they may tend to savour more of ballet than of opera. A very fine example of his style is the setting for Act III of *Troilus* in which the silent and motionless sentry in his crow's nest on the palisades gives the clue to the whole mood of the opera.

"To me," says Sir Hugh, "the glories of Mediterranean architecture lie always in the way that man, although physically dwarfed by the gigantic structures, is yet dignified by the masterly use of scale in the settings which the architects have provided for him.

"How to convey this combination in a limited space on even a stage the size of Covent Garden is a never-ending headache to the designer—but I hope that by the use of 'trick' illusions—the spacing of stone joists, the height of doors, the shallowness of steps, grading of rakes, and so on, something approaching realism has been achieved.

"We have, of course, to draw a good deal upon our imagination, in devising interiors for a place like Troy, which has been wiped right off the map—but the excellent fantasy Malcolm Price brought to the designing of the costumes for *Troilus and Cressida* certainly helped to bring a scene like that of Act II to life, and in this scene, too, I found good use for the talents of some of the students of the Royal College of Arts in designing the tapestry curtain and other details."

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Matchless Mrs Siddons *(Contd.)*

momentary. The interrupters went to extreme lengths. Two magistrates read the Riot Act from the stage and beat a hasty retreat. The military were brought in but not in sufficient force to do more than heighten the confusion. This went on for three months without interruption and sporadically for a year. Mrs. Siddons did not appear after the first night. At last, Kemble reduced the Pit price by 6d. and lessened the number of private boxes. It was not discovered whose brain was behind the malign activity. The attitude of the authorities was interesting. Frightened by the French Revolution, they seemed content to regard Covent Garden as a kind of safety-vent.

On 29 June, 1812, Mrs. Siddons took a formal farewell of the stage in the character of Lady Macbeth. She was easily persuaded to emerge from time to time on special occasions, which Hazlitt thought a mistake. Her prestige was tremendous. People deferred to her opinion and strangers went to unpardonable lengths to see her and to speak to her. She knew she was a wonder. "Ah! my dear," she said to a small girl, "you may well look at me, for you will never see my like again." Some of her recorded remarks carry fatuity to a dizzy height. Cleverness was beneath her. The poet, Campbell, her friend and biographer, truly described her as "a great, simple being." 5,000 people followed her remains to St. Mary's, Paddington, when she died in 1831.

Television's Trouper *(Contd.)*

As far as laying the foundations of a career is concerned, one good television appearance is worth about sixty radio dates. The average viewer pays more attention than the average listener. The radio fan is apt to listen to a programme while he is glancing at the paper, washing-up, or doing some other household job. It is different on television, where there is something to be seen. The viewer who listens without looking misses half the show, so he pays more attention and in consequence the television artist makes a deeper impression on his public than the radio artist. New material is constantly required for television appearances; nor is it enough to stand before the cameras and patter away in the manner of a music hall comedian. The television performer must become an easily recognised individualist or the public fails to become impressed and soon tires.

(Continued opposite)

The Cassons in India

Dame Sybil Thorndike, who is at the moment touring in Australia with her husband and the Richardsons in "The Sleeping Prince" and "Separate Tables," has sent us this interesting picture taken outside the Taj Mahal during the Cassons' recent successful visit to India. Dame Sybil and Sir Lewis are seen with Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the Indian Minister of Health, and in her letter Dame Sybil says that Nehru had lent his own plane for their visit to this famous spot.

Television's Trouper *(Contd.)*

Benny's position as a leading West End comedian has only been won as the result of tremendous effort and concentration; his life has been, and still is, dedicated to work, leaving very little time for leisure and relaxation. His success has not gone to his head; he knows his forte and his limitations and does not pretend he can excel in every field of theatrical entertainment. He has no desire to play either in farce or musical comedy; he much prefers to exploit humorous situations on the music hall stage or on television.

Few young comedians of Benny's generation take their work so seriously. He arrives in the theatre practically two hours before the curtain is due to go up. He goes straight to his dressing room and after reading his mail and making up in readiness for his first entrance, he lies down for best part of an hour to relax before starting two strenuous shows, which require undivided attention and intensive concentration.

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The First Three Plays *(Contd.)*

is rather Mephistophelian in aspect and Miss Maxine Audley makes a decorously tragic beauty of Olivia. The play opens with Orsino listening to Western music played by a Sikh orchestra. Later Viola and the sailors come wandering along the shore of the Dead Sea. Mr. Malcolm Pride's décor is unusual and the term "picturesque" does not quite do it justice. The drinking scene is beautifully lit, for which Mr. Peter Streuli must be commended, and the red-hot poker to burn the sack is a new feature, so are the virginals upon which Feste appears to play his own accompaniment to "Mistress Mine."

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THE BAD SEED
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Evs. 7.30, Mats. Wed., Sat. 2.30
TIGER AT THE GATES
Michael Redgrave, Diane Cilento, Barbara Jefford

DUCHESS (Tem. 8243)
Evs. 7.30, Mats. Thurs. 2.30, Sats. 5.0 & 8.0
UNCERTAIN JOY
Roger Livesey and Ursula Jeans

DUKE OF YORK'S (Tem. 5122)
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MOBY DICK
Orson Welles

GARRICK (Tem. 4601)
Evs. 7.45, Wed. 2.30, Sat. 5.0 & 8.0
THE LOST GENERATION
Nora Swinburne, Leslie Phillips

HIPPODROME (Ger. 3272)
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Diana Churchill, Bernard Lee, Richard Carlyle

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William Sylvester, Dickie Henderson

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MY THREE ANGELS
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